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SEVENTEENTH PROGRESS REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON THE UNITED NATIONS OBSERVER MISSION IN LIBERIA

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to Security Council resolution 1041 (1996) of 29 January 1996, by which the Council extended the mandate of the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL) until 31 May 1996. The report provides an update on developments in Liberia since my report of 1 April 1996 (S/1996/232) and contains recommendations concerning the future role of UNOMIL in Liberia.

II. POLITICAL ASPECTS

2. The deterioration of the peace process in Liberia throughout the first months of the year, as described in my last report, culminated on 6 April in the eruption of fighting in Monrovia. In my letter to the President of the Security Council dated 22 April (S/1996/312), I described the widespread looting and complete breakdown of law and order which ensued. Despite a short lull, hostilities have continued since 6 April, seriously jeopardizing the Abuja peace process.

Genesis of the crisis

3. While the fighting was sparked off by the attempted arrest of General Roosevelt Johnson, the leader of a wing of the United Liberation Movement of Liberia for Democracy (ULIMO-J), the underlying causes are much deeper. Skirmishes between Alhaji Kromah's and General Johnson's wings of ULIMO and between the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) and the Liberian Peace Council (LPC) have recently created discord among members of the Council of State. As large numbers of fighters came into Monrovia, purportedly to protect their leaders, security in the city deteriorated. At the same time, the Council of State seemed determined to assert itself in ways contrary to the spirit of the Abuja Agreement, reportedly against the advice of some of its own members. It adopted protocols under which the transitional Government would be called "the Government of Liberia" and the Council of State the "collective presidency." Mr. Taylor and Alhaji Kromah began referring to their forces as

"government forces", as they went into the ULIMO-J strongholds of Kakata and Tubmanburg in mid-March, asserting that they were helping the Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) to maintain security in those areas. These events created fear that some Liberian leaders were sidestepping the transitional arrangements and processes provided for under the Abuja Agreement.

4. It was in this volatile atmosphere that on 23 March, following confrontations between rival groups within ULIMO-J, the transitional Government issued a warrant for the arrest of General Roosevelt Johnson, accusing him of the murder of a man found dead on his property. General Johnson refused to turn himself over and, on 6 April, the Rapid Reaction Unit of the national police, backed up by the forces of NPFL and General Alhaji Kromah's Wing of ULIMO (ULIMO-K), attempted to arrest him forcibly. They were attacked by General Johnson's forces, supported by fighters from the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) and LPC.

5. Detailed information about the fighting is contained in section III and annex I to the present report.

Meeting of the Economic Community of West African States

6. The ECOWAS Committee of Nine met at Accra on 7 May to explore ways to achieve a cessation of hostilities and the reactivation of the peace process. Councilmen Taylor and Kromah failed to attend the meeting, and both indicated that the Chairman of the Council of State would represent the transitional Government. Councilmen Boley, Quiah and Tamba Tailor, as well as General Roosevelt Johnson and a number of NPFL ministerial appointees, attended the meeting. The Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), Mr. Salim Ahmed Salim, my Special Envoy, Mr. James O. C. Jonah, and my Special Representative, Mr. Anthony Nyakyi, were also present. In the meantime, Alhaji Kromah travelled to Abuja and other West African capitals to consult ECOWAS Governments on the situation in Liberia.

7. The ECOWAS Foreign Ministers adopted the Mechanism for Returning Liberia to the Abuja Agreement, under which they reaffirmed the Agreement as the only basis for peace in Liberia and agreed on a number of conditions to be fulfilled by the Liberian factions. These conditions include the restoration of the cease-fire; the withdrawal of fighters and the deployment of ECOMOG in Monrovia; the removal of arms from the city and the restoration of Monrovia as a safe haven; the guarantee of freedom of movement for civilians; the return of weapons taken from ECOMOG and vehicles and other equipment looted from UNOMIL, the United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations; and the reactivation of the Cease-fire Violations Committee. ECOWAS decided to postpone the Summit until early August, indicating that its further involvement in Liberia would be reviewed at that time on the basis of progress made in fulfilling these conditions.

8. ECOWAS also decided that the protocols recently adopted by the Council of State declaring the transitional Government to be "the Government of Liberia" and the Council of State to be its "collective presidency" contradicted the spirit of the Abuja Agreement. ECOWAS stressed that the transitional Government

must be inclusive, and made clear its resolve not to recognize any Government that came to office through the use of force. In accordance with the ECOWAS conditions, General Johnson would be reinstated in his ministerial post and safe passage would be guaranteed for the withdrawal of fighters concentrated at the Barclay Training Centre to agreed areas outside Monrovia.

9. Discussions at the ECOWAS meeting also focused on the resource requirements of ECOMOG. Some countries expressed a willingness to contribute additional troops if financial resources were made available. They stressed that such resources should be provided to the force as a whole, unconditionally, and should cover not only logistic support but also reimbursement of payments to troops. Many Foreign Ministers expressed doubt, however, that significant resources would be forthcoming, given past experience in trying to raise funds for ECOMOG.

10. The ECOWAS Foreign Ministers welcomed the initiative of the Government of the United States of America in establishing an International Contact Group on Liberia (ICGL). That Contact Group, which met for the first time on 26 April at Geneva, brings together key donor Governments, the United Nations, ECOWAS, OAU and international agencies concerned with Liberia. During its meeting, ICGL identified three issues critical to peace in Liberia: restoring security in Monrovia, reinforcing ECOMOG, and encouraging the factions to return to the Abuja peace process.

11. The members of the Council of State have welcomed the recommendations made by ECOWAS Foreign Ministers and have stated that they will abide by them. General Johnson has also accepted the conditions set by ECOWAS and has indicated that he plans to return to Liberia. Even so, hostilities continue.

Visit of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General to Liberia

12. On 18 April, my Special Envoy arrived in Monrovia to assess the future prospects of the peace process and the role the United Nations could play in that regard. While in Monrovia, he met the Chairman of the Council of State, representatives of ECOWAS and ECOMOG, and political, civic and faction leaders. On 5 May, he travelled to Accra where he met the Chairman of ECOWAS, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Nigeria, General Johnson and other leaders. He also attended the meeting of the ECOWAS Committee of Nine on 7 and 8 May.

13. My Special Envoy's discussions focused on the continued validity of the Abuja Agreement in the light of recent events; the role of the Council of State; on prospects for conducting elections and restoring peace in Liberia; and the problems encountered by ECOMOG in carrying out its responsibilities in Liberia. Upon his return to New York, my Special Envoy briefed me, as well as the Security Council, on his findings. In particular, he emphasized the need for Monrovia to be restored as a safe haven and for the Council of State to work within the spirit envisaged under the Abuja Agreement. He also expressed the view that the restoration of peace and stability in Liberia would be a difficult process, given the deep mistrust between the factions.

III. MILITARY ASPECTS

Nature and impact of the hostilities

14. During the first week after fighting broke out on 6 April, there was a complete breakdown of law and order in Monrovia. Fighters from all factions moved into the commercial district of the city, systematically looting stores and United Nations offices and warehouses. Reinforcements were brought in by the factions from outlying areas and fighters from all factions indiscriminately broke into houses, set buildings on fire, commandeered vehicles from the United Nations and private citizens and disarmed ECOMOG soldiers manning check-points. AFL and ULIMO-J stormed the prison and freed General Charles Julu and other detainees who had attempted a coup against the transitional Government in September 1994. The airport was attacked, apparently by ULIMO-J fighters, killing two ECOMOG soldiers and damaging two commercial aircraft, as well as the three ECOMOG helicopters financed by the United States.

15. Fighters quickly moved towards the Mamba Point area of Monrovia - where UNOMIL, the United States Embassy and many United Nations offices are located - apparently to seek out General Johnson, who was reportedly hiding in the area. It was not until 10 April that ECOMOG was able to provide some measure of security for UNOMIL offices. However, on 11 April, UNOMIL headquarters and other United Nations buildings in Mamba Point were forcibly occupied and looted by fighters from both sides, forcing nine military observers and civilian staff, as well as ECOMOG soldiers providing security there, to seek safety at the United States Embassy. Despite promises by Alhaji Kromah and Mr. Taylor to stop the looting, it continued unabated. All United Nations international personnel who were trapped in their homes and offices also safely found their way to the United States Embassy, from which the United States evacuated them to neighbouring countries, while local United Nations personnel moved to safe areas in other parts of the city. A temporary UNOMIL headquarters was established at the United Nations residential compound at Riverview, where my Special Representative and 19 civilian and 5 military personnel, including the Chief Military Observer, set up operations.

16. Many of the fighters engaged in the hostilities in Monrovia were under the age of 18 and seemed to operate with little organizational structure or control from their commanders. Some were clearly under the influence of drugs and alcohol. While hostilities continued, they roamed the streets in disorderly gangs, harassing civilians and sometimes squabbling among themselves over loot. The factions employed an assortment of weapons, including shoulder-fired rocket launchers, anti-aircraft guns, mortars and heavy machine guns. However, it appeared that few military tactics were employed, especially in the first days of the fighting. Firing was often inaccurate, providing little tactical advantage, but causing indiscriminate damage to property. Rocket-propelled grenades were used wantonly, mostly to help in the looting. At times, civilians were caught in the cross-fire. Throughout the fighting, the Barclay Training Centre was surrounded by a loose cordon of hostile fighters and subjected to shelling by NPFL and ULIMO-K forces. While the Training Centre experienced the heaviest fighting, it is believed that most fatalities in the barracks resulted from sickness and disease rather than hostile fire.

17. As fighting continued during the second week of the crisis, the factions began to establish control over certain areas of the city, which, for the most part, they still maintain. NPFL has established control over sections of eastern and central Monrovia, as well as the airport. ULIMO-K controls Bushrod Island up to and beyond the Po River, while ULIMO-J, LPC and AFL control the Barclay Training Centre barracks, some areas of central Monrovia and the eastern suburbs (see annex III). It should be noted, however, that the relative positions of the factions change daily owing to the constant infiltration of fighters and the urban nature of the hostilities. While fighting continues, it seems to be at a stalemate, with neither side able to take full control of the city.

18. In addition to Monrovia, fighting continues between the two wings of ULIMO in Tubmanburg. On 28 April, ULIMO-J forces attacked ECOMOG troops at Sinjie, killing one soldier and seriously wounding another. ECOMOG was not able to establish the reason for the attack. Skirmishes were also reported between NPFL and LPC forces in Grand Bassa, Sinoe, Grand Gedeh and Maryland counties. NPFL reportedly dislodged LPC from the city of Buchanan, but ECOMOG still maintains control of the city (see annex IV).

Deployment of UNOMIL

19. Prior to the outbreak of hostilities in Monrovia, UNOMIL military personnel were deployed in Monrovia, Buchanan, Kakata and Suehn (see annex IV). Following the outbreak of fighting, 88 of the Mission's 93 military observers were relocated to Freetown and Dakar, with the assistance of the United States Government. The military observers deployed to the field stations at Kakata and Suehn were escorted by ECOMOG to Monrovia on 13 April. Those at Buchanan returned to Monrovia by sea on 14 April on board an ECOMOG ship. Most of these military observers have now been repatriated. However, 10 remain on stand-by in Freetown and will return to Monrovia as soon as conditions permit. Five military observers (including the Chief Military Observer) remain in Monrovia to support the political efforts aimed at peacefully resolving the crisis. Their tasks include monitoring military developments, patrolling the city (as security permits), convening meetings of the Cease-fire Violations Committee, which is chaired by UNOMIL and organizing security escorts for faction representatives participating in consultations to resolve the crisis.

Deployment of the Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group

20. ECOMOG was not able to halt the hostilities when they erupted on 6 April. It maintained that the fighting was a matter between the factions and that it could not intervene in view of its limited manpower and resources, as well as the nature of its mandate as a peace-keeping force. Given these constraints, ECOMOG was also unable to provide protection for United Nations personnel and property. However, once ECOMOG received reinforcements from outlying areas, it assigned a security detail to the Riverview compound and for my Special Representative, as well as for the mediation team and some faction representatives involved in consultations to end the crisis.

21. While ECOMOG has been able to prevent ULIMO-J reinforcements from coming into Monrovia from the west across the Po River, it has not been able to deter

the massive movement of fighters in and out of the city centre from other areas. In accordance with the cease-fire arrangements that went into effect on 19 April, ECOMOG deployed in central Monrovia as fighters started to withdraw from the city, establishing check-points and undertaking patrols. Fighters continued to move freely, however, and when the cease-fire broke down on 29 April, ECOMOG withdrew to specific locations in sufficient numbers to deter attack from the factions. ECOMOG is currently deployed on Bushrod Island and maintains a presence at the telecommunications headquarters, the two bridges leading to the north and the airport. ECOMOG also maintains a presence at the seaport and around the Riverview compound.

22. Outside Monrovia, ECOMOG has continued to maintain its presence in Buchanan and Kakata. However, ECOMOG has completely withdrawn from Gbarnga, Bo, Tienne and Sinjie and reduced its strength in Buchanan and Kakata, to provide reinforcements for Monrovia.

23. ECOMOG has suffered a number of casualties since fighting resumed. It has taken risks and when possible it has tried to deter the fighting and ensure the safety of United Nations personnel. While reports have been received that some individual ECOMOG soldiers may have been involved in looting or may have provided arms to fighters, such actions were neither systematic nor a matter of policy. If they did occur, they may reflect the chronic lack of resources suffered by the force, all the way down to the foot soldier, who is expected to operate in a hostile environment without proper equipment and sometimes without having been paid for many weeks.

IV. SECURITY ASPECTS

24. With continued fighting, the security situation in Monrovia remains dangerous and unpredictable. During the first days of the crisis, United Nations staff members were placed in grave danger when they were forced from their homes and offices and robbed and harassed while seeking safety, and when the vehicles they were driving were hijacked. Some local United Nations staff displayed particular bravery in assisting United Nations international personnel to safety. All non-essential UNOMIL and United Nations agency personnel have now been relocated to neighbouring countries or repatriated. As noted earlier, ECOMOG is now providing security for United Nations personnel; however, because of chronic manpower and logistic constraints, it cannot guarantee their security at all times.

25. The most insecure areas of Monrovia remain the centre of the city and the eastern suburbs. The security situation at the port, which was not targeted during the hostilities, also remains tenuous. United Nations and non-governmental organization warehouses at the port have been looted on several occasions and fighters continue to roam the area. In addition, thousands of civilians have swarmed into the port to try to get on ships leaving the country, making the area extremely volatile. ECOMOG has recently increased its deployment in an effort to control the situation there.

26. While United Nations and international personnel have not themselves been targeted, the threat that their property, particularly vehicles, will be looted

remains high. There is also a risk that United Nations personnel could be caught in the cross-fire between opposing forces and that desperate fighters could once again resort to hostage-taking, as they did at the Barclay Training Centre. Given the persistent threat to the safety of United Nations personnel and overall insecurity in Monrovia, their movement remains restricted.

27. Developments in Monrovia are reviewed daily by UNOMIL and the United Nations designated official for security, with a view to ensuring the swift and safe relocation of United Nations personnel to neighbouring countries should security deteriorate further. Since the airport was destroyed during the fighting and remains closed, the only means of evacuating staff from Monrovia is either via the St. Paul River or by road to the port. Both routes present certain risks and are assessed daily.

Looting of United Nations equipment

28. As noted above, UNOMIL and all United Nations agencies have been systematically looted by fighters from all factions since 6 April. The fighters cleaned out all United Nations offices, damaged the buildings and looted United Nations warehouses. Some 80 per cent of UNOMIL vehicles were taken and many were destroyed. A large number of accoutrements bearing the United Nations insignia were stolen by fighters, who took to wearing the blue berets and other United Nations emblems. UNOMIL telephones, computers, photocopiers, communications equipment and general consumable items, including goods related to demobilization, were all looted. UNOMIL is currently estimating the value of looted goods and equipment. At least three months would be required to rebuild the Mission's logistic base.

29. My Special Representative has urged the faction leaders to ensure that the vehicles and equipment looted from UNOMIL, the United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations are returned. The faction leaders have asserted that it would be difficult to retrieve the loot from the fighters. Even so, after UNOMIL received information that some United Nations equipment was loaded onto ships destined for certain West African ports, it requested the concerned Governments to assist the United Nations in retrieving the goods. Subsequently, some equipment, mostly small, marketable items, was retrieved. It is unlikely, however, that a substantial amount of equipment will be returned.

V. HUMAN RIGHTS

30. Given the threatening security situation, UNOMIL has not been able to investigate actively the many reports of human rights violations committed during the hostilities, including rape, abductions, targeted killings of individuals and forced conscription. UNOMIL confirmed reports of two incidents when the heads of fighters were severed and displayed in the streets of Monrovia. The death toll among the civilian population has yet to be determined, but it is reported that a number of civilians have been killed, many as a result of the cross-fire.

31. Many civilian leaders were forced to leave Monrovia or to take refuge at the ECOMOG base, including the Chairman of the Council of State,

Wilton Sankawulo; Councilman Tamba Tailor; the Minister of Defence, General Hezekia Bowen; and the former President of the Interim Government for National Unity, Mr. Amos Sawyer. Once security conditions permit, UNOMIL will investigate reported human rights violations committed during the hostilities.

VI. HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

32. The gains made in providing humanitarian assistance to those in need over the past several months appear to have been completely reversed by the recent hostilities. Over the past six weeks, more than half of Monrovia's 1.3 million citizens have been displaced. Many thousands have fled the country, often risking their lives to seek safety. At the same time, provision of assistance has been constrained by continued insecurity, the systematic looting of equipment and the evacuation of the majority of international relief personnel. Despite these conditions, the United Nations Humanitarian Coordinator and other essential staff have remained in Monrovia to assess humanitarian needs and arrange the delivery of relief and assistance. The World Food Programme (WFP), the United Nations Development Programme, the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) have also maintained skeleton staffs in Monrovia.

33. Assessments of the humanitarian impact of the fighting revealed concentrations of displaced persons in several locations, including about 20,000 people at the Greystone compound adjacent to the United States Embassy. Shortages of food and medicine, coupled with unsanitary conditions in these shelters, create the risk of outbreaks of infectious disease. Hospitals, while still functioning, are understaffed, badly in need of supplies and under constant security threat. WFP is implementing a targeted feeding programme that will cover 570,000 persons. It has commenced delivery of emergency food aid to critical locations, including Monrovia's 3 major hospitals and 31 shelters housing approximately 175,000 internally displaced persons.

34. Some international personnel from non-governmental organizations and donor countries began returning to Monrovia in mid-April and are working closely with UNICEF, WHO and the Ministry of Health in responding to emergency medical, water and sanitation requirements and in trying to contain the spread of infectious disease. These agencies also provided emergency medical assistance to those in need at the Barclay Training Centre.

35. Information on humanitarian conditions outside Monrovia is extremely limited. International relief and development organizations provided the majority of services to civilians prior to the outbreak of hostilities. The cessation of these activities as a result of the relocation of staff and looting of supplies, vehicles, and equipment, is expected to have a negative impact on relatively advanced efforts to restore some sections of the country to self-sufficiency. A few non-governmental organizations have, however, begun to resume cross-border delivery of assistance to areas in need.

36. The Liberian authorities, United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations have agreed to develop a three-month contingency plan for the

delivery of relief services, which will form the basis for an appeal to support these activities. There is, however, a consensus within the relief community that full-scale operations cannot recommence without the existence of credible security guarantees by the factions.

Situation of Liberian refugees

37. The outbreak of fighting shattered prospects for the imminent repatriation of more than 750,000 refugees, many of whom have been living in exile for more than six years. Moreover, the deteriorating security situation in Monrovia, hitherto considered a safe haven, is forcing thousands more Liberians to seek refuge in neighbouring countries. Unfortunately, few countries in the subregion appear willing to accept additional refugees. The Bulk Challenger, a ship carrying nearly 2,000 Liberians, was stranded on the high seas for more than one week because no country in the region would let it dock. Reports indicate that the ship may have been carrying some armed fighters, as well as bona fide refugees. In the end, the Government of Ghana agreed to accept the refugees. UNHCR has appealed to the countries of the subregion to maintain their traditional open policy of asylum and to accept Liberians seeking refuge.

38. The efforts of UNHCR to promote self-sufficiency among the 123,000 refugees from Sierra Leone living in Liberia have been greatly affected by the fighting. A significant number of Sierra Leonean refugees trapped in Monrovia have expressed a strong desire to repatriate to their home country. UNHCR will provide assistance in this regard as soon as security conditions permit. Among the prospective repatriates are 75 unaccompanied minors who had been living at a shelter that was looted and taken over by fighters in mid-April.

VII. FINANCIAL ASPECTS

39. My proposed budgets for the financing of UNOMIL, covering the periods from 1 June 1996 to 30 June 1997 (A/50/650/Add.2 and 3) are currently before the General Assembly for consideration. It is estimated that the cost of maintaining UNOMIL at its currently authorized strength will be $1,603,500 gross for the month of June 1996, $3,553,700 gross for the month of July 1996 and $2,187,400 gross per month beginning 1 August 1996.

40. Therefore, should the Security Council decide to extend the mandate of UNOMIL at the reduced strength, as recommended in paragraph 49 below, the cost of maintaining the Observer Mission during the extension period will entail an adjustment to the monthly rates indicated above. It is, therefore, my intention to submit revised cost estimates to the General Assembly shortly for its consideration.

41. As of 9 May 1996, unpaid assessed contributions to the Special Account for UNOMIL since the inception of the Mission totalled $11.9 million. The total outstanding assessed contributions for all peace-keeping operations on 9 May 1996 amounted to $1,716 million.

42. Since my last report (S/1996/232), there have been no further voluntary contributions to the Trust Fund for Liberia.

VIII. OBSERVATIONS

43. Over the past six weeks, the faction leaders have clearly demonstrated their disregard for the aspirations of the Liberian people for peace. They have shown wanton disrespect for the United Nations, ECOWAS and the international community and have forced most international personnel to relocate to other countries.

44. The Liberian civil war has engaged ECOWAS for over six years. The West African States, themselves facing financial hardship, have spent millions of dollars, negotiated countless peace agreements and sacrificed the lives of their young men in trying to bring peace to Liberia. Hostilities have, on occasion, spilled over the borders, affecting the stability of Liberia's neighbours. In addition, the ECOWAS States, which have hosted Liberian refugees for a number of years, face the prospect of thousands more seeking refuge on their shores.

45. At their recent meeting at Accra, the ECOWAS Foreign Ministers reaffirmed the Abuja Agreement as the only basis for peace in Liberia and agreed upon a number of steps necessary to resume its implementation. ECOWAS warned the faction leaders that if they did not implement those steps, it would reconsider its involvement in Liberia at its next summit meeting scheduled for early August 1996. The withdrawal of ECOMOG from Liberia could be catastrophic not only for the country but also for the subregion as a whole.

46. Should ECOWAS be compelled to take the decision to disengage from Liberia and withdraw ECOMOG, UNOMIL would have no choice but to do the same. Therefore, I strongly urge the Liberian faction leaders to consider carefully the wide-ranging consequences that their actions during the next two months will have and, in this light, to implement immediately the measures agreed upon by ECOWAS at Accra.

47. During the months leading up to the current crisis, the voice of Liberian civil society has, on many occasions, been stifled and journalists have even been detained for criticizing the actions of some members of the transitional Government. During their meeting at Accra on 7 May, the ECOWAS Foreign Ministers agreed that the transitional Government must be inclusive and that the Council of State must resume its work as envisaged under the Abuja Agreement. All Council members, who represent various sectors of Liberian society, should have a voice in the decision-making process. It is also necessary that ways and means be found to enable civil society to assume its rightful place in the peace process. In this connection, I have requested my Special Representative to encourage greater input into the political process from a broad spectrum of civilian leaders and to continue to urge the transitional Government to restore the atmosphere necessary for the democratic process to flourish and for the media to resume its work.

48. In the absence of functioning institutions to organize the electoral process, and given the continued instability, it is most unlikely that elections could be held in August 1996, as provided for under the Abuja Agreement. The future of the electoral process, at least one that could be supported by the international community, will depend on the restoration of basic conditions of

peace and security and on the resumption of the implementation of the Abuja Agreement.

49. In its resolution 1020 (1995), the Security Council mandated UNOMIL to assist in the implementation of the Abuja Agreement, especially the disarmament and demobilization process. However, in the present insecure and unstable conditions that prevail in Monrovia and throughout Liberia, there is little that UNOMIL can accomplish with respect to these objectives. At the same time, through the use of its good offices, UNOMIL continues to play an important role in supporting the efforts of ECOWAS to facilitate the resumption of the peace process. It can also facilitate, in consultation with ECOMOG, the adoption of confidence-building measures, with a view to creating conditions conducive to a return to the Abuja Agreement. I, therefore, recommend that the Security Council extend the mandate of UNOMIL for three months, until 31 August. During this period, UNOMIL's strength, which currently consists of 25 civilian and military personnel, would remain approximately at its present level, taking into account the possible need to increase or reduce the number slightly depending on the evolution of the security situation on the ground.

50. Following the ECOWAS Summit, I shall submit to the Security Council recommendations on the role, if any, that UNOMIL can play after 31 August. Evidently, those recommendations will depend on the decisions that ECOWAS will take regarding its own role in Liberia. They will also be contingent upon implementation by the faction leaders of the concrete steps necessary to restore basic law and order in Monrovia and elsewhere. These steps must begin with the strict observance of the cease-fire, the withdrawal of fighters from Monrovia, the deployment of ECOMOG throughout the city and the restoration of its status as a safe haven. Once these basic objectives have been achieved, steps should be taken to ensure that negotiations are initiated, under the auspices of ECOWAS and the United Nations, with a view to resolving those issues that were not fully addressed in the Abuja Agreement and elaborating a comprehensive implementation plan. The willingness of the faction leaders to engage in genuine negotiations and mutual accommodation will no doubt be a critical factor in determining the continued involvement of the international community in Liberia. The faction leaders should carefully ponder the lessons of Somalia in this regard.

51. Issues related to the security of UNOMIL and the humanitarian agencies in Liberia, as well as the return of looted equipment, will also have to be addressed. It is unlikely that the international community will be ready to re-engage itself in the peace process in Liberia until these issues are fully clarified and the factions provide sufficient guarantees for the safety and security of innocent civilians, as well as United Nations and other international personnel.

52. As regards UNOMIL, it will be recalled that, at the time of its establishment, it was clearly recognized that unarmed United Nations military observers would require the provision of security by ECOMOG in order to fulfil their mandated tasks. For well-known reasons, however, ECOMOG has not been able to provide the level of security necessary for UNOMIL personnel to function in Liberia, or to fulfil entirely its own responsibilities as a peace-keeping force. This was amply demonstrated by the events of the past few weeks.

Careful consideration will therefore have to be given in the coming weeks to finding ways and means of ensuring that these difficulties are effectively addressed.

53. The involvement of UNOMIL in Liberia marked the first time the United Nations had deployed a peace-keeping mission in parallel with that of a regional organization, in this case a subregional organization. I have stressed from the very beginning that the role foreseen for UNOMIL in Liberia was predicated upon the assumption that ECOMOG would be in a position to perform the wide-ranging tasks entrusted to it. Unfortunately, ECOMOG never received the manpower and resources necessary to enable it to carry out its responsibilities effectively. It would be an illusion to think that this innovative model of peace-keeping will be able to succeed in Liberia, especially under current conditions, unless sufficient and reliable sources of funding are provided to ECOMOG, and unless the force is strengthened and structured in a manner that will enable it to carry out its tasks as a professional peace-keeping force.

54. I commend ECOWAS and OAU for their continued efforts to facilitate the resumption of the peace process. I would also like to thank my Special Representative and the staff of UNOMIL for their continuing efforts, under very trying circumstances, to facilitate a peaceful resolution to the crisis.

Annex I

Detailed account of the fighting in Monrovia between 6 and 29 April 1996

1. The fighting that began on 6 April 1996 quickly escalated and spread to central Monrovia. Thousands of civilians, including United Nations and other international personnel, were caught in the crossfire. More than 2,300 people were evacuated from the city with the assistance of the Government of the United States. UNOMIL and the United Nations agencies were forced to relocate a large number of personnel to neighbouring countries. As NPFL/ULIMO-K forces took control of many areas of the city, most of the combined ULIMO-J, LPC and AFL forces retreated to the AFL Barclay Training Centre barracks in the city centre, taking with them at gunpoint hundreds of civilians, including foreign nationals. Hundreds of other civilians voluntarily fled to the barracks, seeking refuge from hostile fighters. Conditions at the barracks were described as desperate, and civilians were apparently used as human shields to protect the barracks against NPFL/ULIMO-K attacks. About 50 ECOMOG soldiers were also held hostage.

2. While the ULIMO-J/LPC/AFL alliance has been referred to as the joint "Krahn forces", it should be noted that these factions, while predominately Krahn, include a number of other ethnic groups. Throughout the hostilities, Mr. Taylor and Alhaji Kromah have refused to negotiate directly with them, continuing to refer to their own fighters as "government forces", and to the ULIMO-J, LPC and AFL forces as criminal elements. For their part, some representatives of the ULIMO-J/LPC/AFL alliance took the view that the transitional Government had collapsed with the eruption of fighting in Monrovia and that no one should pretend to speak on its behalf until the question of governance was reviewed at the ECOWAS Summit. These contentious views impeded negotiations for a cease-fire.

3. When the fighting erupted, UNOMIL and ECOWAS, with the Ambassadors of Guinea, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and the United States, formed a team to undertake intensive mediation efforts aimed at establishing a cease-fire and reactivating the peace process. On 11 April 1996, the Chairman of ECOWAS, President Rawlings of Ghana, dispatched a high-level delegation to Liberia, led by his National Security Adviser, Captain Kojo Tsikata. Working with the mediation team, the ECOWAS delegation reached agreement with Mr. Taylor and Alhaji Kromah on the terms of the cease-fire, the deployment of ECOMOG in Monrovia and around the Barclay Training Centre, the disarmament of fighters concentrated at the barracks, the delivery of humanitarian assistance to those in need there and the withdrawal of fighters from the city. It was agreed that, following the implementation of these measures, the issues concerning General Johnson (which remained a major concern to Mr. Taylor and Alhaji Kromah), as well as ways and means of putting the peace process back on track, would be addressed. As agreed, the Cease-fire Violations Committee, chaired by UNOMIL, was immediately reactivated to monitor the cease-fire.

4. These measures resulted in a temporary halt in the shelling of the Training Centre by NPFL/ULIMO-K forces, enabling the mediation team to arrange a meeting, on 18 April, with representatives of ULIMO-J, LPC, AFL and civilians trapped at

the barracks. The Training Centre commanders agreed to the terms of the cease-fire, which went into effect on 19 April, and to the release of the hostages held at the barracks. Soon thereafter, some 226 foreign nationals and a number of Liberians were released. As fighters withdrew, ECOMOG began to deploy in the city. However, contrary to the agreement, NPFL remained deployed in the eastern section of the city and ULIMO-J maintained a presence outside the Training Centre barracks.

5. The cease-fire held, for the most part, as efforts to resolve the outstanding issues continued. The mediation team encouraged General Johnson to leave Liberia, at least temporarily, as a means of defusing tensions. He ultimately left Monrovia for Accra on 3 May, at the invitation of the Chairman of ECOWAS, to participate in the ECOWAS Summit scheduled for 8 May. In the meantime, Mr. Taylor and Alhaji Kromah insisted that government offices be reopened and that the Council of State begin to operate from the executive mansion, which ECOMOG had sealed off as a security precaution. The mediation team and the ECOMOG Field Commander advised them that this could provoke an attack from the Barclay Training Centre, as the executive mansion is within firing range of the barracks. The cease-fire broke down on 29 April when an attempted meeting of the Council of State, attended by Chairman Sankawulo together with Councilmen Taylor and Kromah, was cut short after fighting erupted between ULIMO-J and NPFL/ULIMO-K forces near the executive mansion.

6. The fighting rapidly escalated overnight into some of the worst fighting witnessed since the start of the civil war in December 1989. Hostilities soon spread throughout central Monrovia, as fighters who had withdrawn to outlying areas returned in large numbers, forcing ECOMOG to withdraw from the city centre.

Annex II

Composition of the military component of the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia

	At 5 April 1996	At 15 May 1996	
	Observers	Monrovia	On standby in Freetown
Bangladesh	15	-	3
China	7	-	-
Czech Republic	6	-	-
Egypt	11	3	-
Guinea-Bissau	3	-	-
India	9	2	2
Jordan	8	-	-
Kenya	11	-	1
Malaysia	9	-	2
Pakistan	8	-	2
Uruguay	6	-	-
Total	93	5	10

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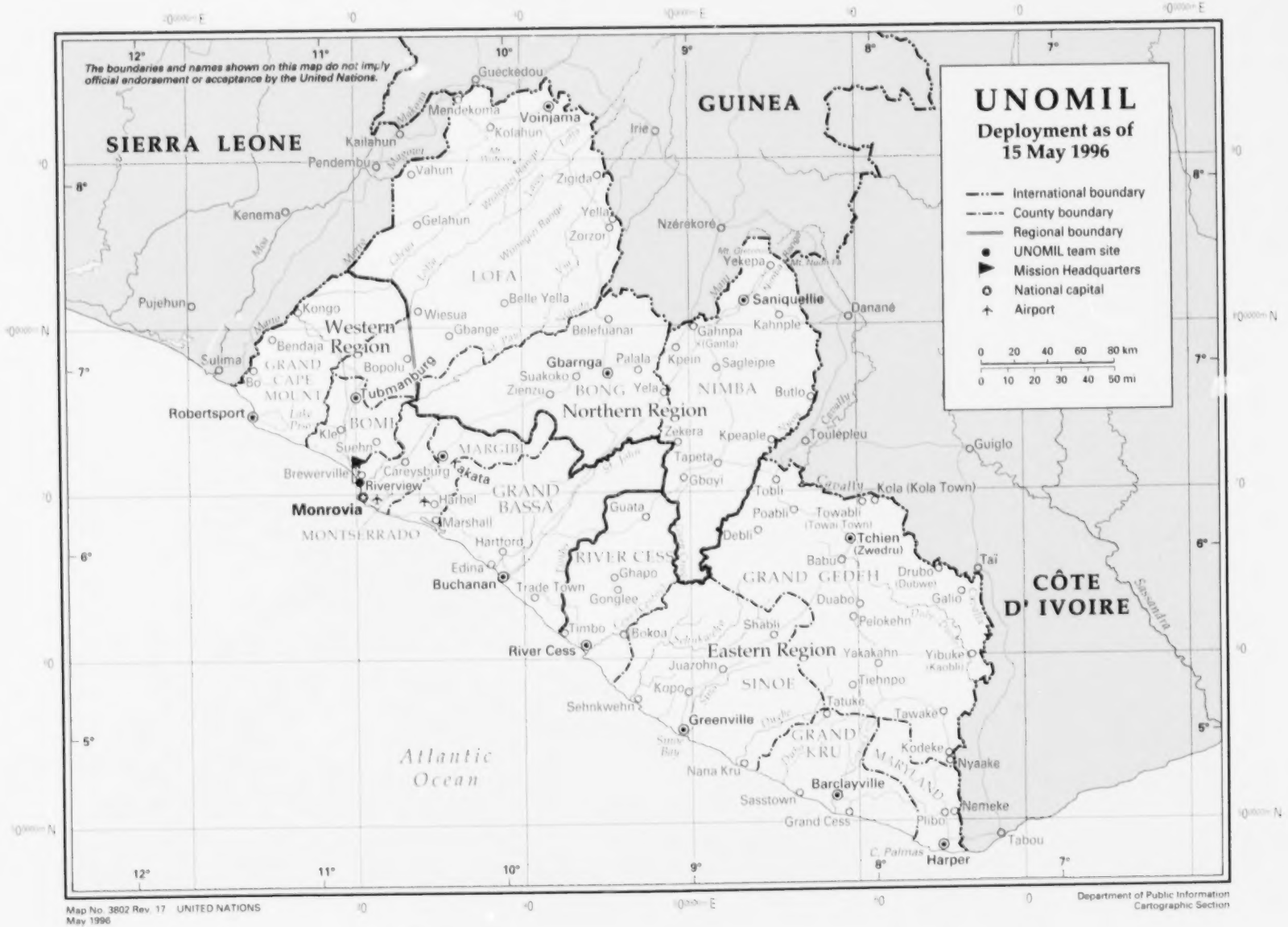
The boundaries and names shown on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.
UNOMIL
Deployment as of 15 May 1996
International boundary
County boundary
Regional boundary
UNOMIL team site
Mission Headquarters
National capital
Airport
0 20 40 60 80 km
0 10 20 30 40 50 mi
SIERRA LEONE
GUINEA
CÔTE D' IVOIRE
LIBERIA
Atlantic Ocean
Western Region
Northern Region
Eastern Region
LOFA
NIMBA
BONG
GRAND BASSA
GRAND GEDEH
RIVER CESS
SINOE
GRAND KRU
MARYLAND
MONTSERRADO
MARGIBI
GRAND CAPE MOUNT
BOMI
Monrovia
Robertsport
Buchanan
River Cess
Greenville
Barclayville
Harper
Saniquellie
Tchien (Zwedru)
Kola (Kola Town)
Gueckedou
Mendekoma
Voinjama
Kailahun
Pendembu
Vahun
Kenema
Gelahun
Zigida
Yelia
Zorzor
Nzérékoré
Yekepa
Danané
Pujehun
Kongo
Wiesua
Belle Yella
Gbange
Belefuanai
Gahnpa (Ganta)
Kahnple
Sulima
Bendaja
Bopolu
Tubmanburg
Gbarnga
Suakoko
Zienzu
Palala
Kpein
Sagleipie
Butlo
Zekera
Kpeaple
Toulepleu
Guiglo
Tapeta
Gbovi
Tobli
Poabli
Towabli (Towai Town)
Debli
Babu
Drubo (Dubwe)
Tai
Ghapo
Trade Town
Gonglee
Duabo
Galio
Pelokehn
Timbo
Bokoa
Shabli
Yakakahn
Yibuke (Kaobli)
Juarohn
Kopo
Tiehnpo
Tatuke
Sehnkwehn
Tawake
Kodeke
Nyaake
Nana Kru
Sasstown
Nemeke
Grand Cess
Plibo
Tabou
C. Palmas
Brewerville
Careysburg
Kakata
Riverview
Harbel
Marshall
Harttord
Edina
Guata
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